

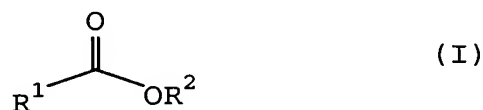
AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Original) A bitumen composition comprising:-

- (i) from 0.1 to 25 % wt of an elastomer,
- (ii) from 0.1 to 40 % wt of a solvent,
- (iii) from 30 to 99 % wt of a bitumen,
- (iv) from 0.1 to 30 % wt of a lithium salt of a C₁₀-C₄₀ fatty acid or hydroxy fatty acid, and optionally
- (v) from 0 to 70 % wt of a filler, all weights based on total bitumen composition,

wherein the solvent is of general formula (I)



wherein R¹ represents a hydrogen atom or a hydrocarbonyl group having from 1 to 6 carbon atoms, R² represents a hydrocarbonyl group having from 1 to 6 carbon atoms, and the sum of the carbon atoms in R¹ and R² is from 5 to 7.

2. (Currently Amended) A The bitumen composition ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 1, wherein the elastomer is a block copolymer comprising at least two terminal poly(monovinylaromatic hydrocarbon) blocks and at least one central poly(conjugated diene) block.

3. (Currently Amended) A The bitumen composition ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 1 ~~or claim 2, where in~~ , wherein, in the solvent of general formula (I), R¹ and R² each independently represent an alkyl group having from 2 to 4 carbon atoms and the sum of the carbon atoms in R¹ and R² is 6.

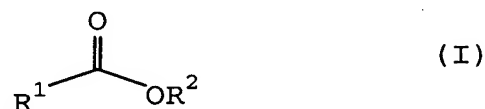
4. (Currently Amended) A The bitumen composition ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 3, wherein the solvent of general formula (I) is n-butyl propionate.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~A The bitumen composition as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4, of claim 1,~~ wherein the bitumen has a penetration in the range of from 100 to 300 dmm (measured at 25 °C according to EN 1426) .

6. (Currently Amended) ~~A The bitumen composition as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 5, of claim 1,~~ wherein the lithium salt is a lithium salt of a C₁₂-C₂₂ fatty acid or hydroxy fatty acid.

7. (Currently Amended) ~~Use of a bitumen composition as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 6~~ A process comprising using the bitumen composition of claim 1 as a cold-applicable adhesive.

8. (Original) A process of preparing a bitumen composition which comprises mixing a first component (A) comprising (i) from 0.1 to 25 % wt of an elastomer, and (ii) from 0.1 to 40 % wt of a solvent; with a second component (B) comprising (iii) from 30 to 99 % wt of a bitumen, (iv) from 0.1 to 30 % wt of a lithium salt of a C₁₀-C₄₀ fatty acid or hydroxy fatty acid, and optionally (v) from 0 to 70 % wt of a filler, all weights based on total bitumen composition, wherein the solvent is of general formula (I)



wherein R¹ represents a hydrogen atom or a hydrocarbyl group having from 1 to 6 carbon atoms, R² represents a hydrocarbyl group having from 1 to 6 carbon atoms, and the sum of the carbon atoms in R¹ and R² is from 5 to 7.

9. (Currently Amended) ~~A process as claimed in claim 8, which process comprises~~ The process of claim 8 further comprising preparing component (B) by heating the bitumen to a temperature in the range of from 200 to 300 °C, and then adding the lithium salt.

10. (Currently Amended) ~~A The process as claimed in~~ of claim 8 or claim 9, wherein the weight ratio of component (A) to component (B) is in the range of from 1:20 to 1:5.

11. (New) The bitumen composition of claim 2, wherein, in the solvent of general formula (I), R^1 and R^2 each independently represent an alkyl group having from 2 to 4 carbon atoms and the sum of the carbon atoms in R^1 and R^2 is 6.
12. (New) The bitumen composition of claim 2, wherein the bitumen has a penetration in the range of from 100 to 300 dmm.
13. (New) The bitumen composition of claim 3, wherein the bitumen has a penetration in the range of from 100 to 300 dmm.
14. (New) The bitumen composition of claim 4, wherein the bitumen has a penetration in the range of from 100 to 300 dmm.
15. (New) The bitumen composition of claim 2, wherein the lithium salt is a lithium salt of a C_{12} - C_{22} fatty acid or hydroxy fatty acid.
16. (New) The bitumen composition of claim 3, wherein the lithium salt is a lithium salt of a C_{12} - C_{22} fatty acid or hydroxy fatty acid.
17. (New) The bitumen composition of claim 4, wherein the lithium salt is a lithium salt of a C_{12} - C_{22} fatty acid or hydroxy fatty acid.
18. (New) The bitumen composition of claim 5, wherein the lithium salt is a lithium salt of a C_{12} - C_{22} fatty acid or hydroxy fatty acid.
19. (New) A process comprising using the bitumen composition of claim 2 as a cold-applicable adhesive.
20. (New) A process comprising using the bitumen composition of claim 3 as a cold-applicable adhesive.

21. (New) A process comprising using the bitumen composition of claim 4 as a cold-applicable adhesive.
22. (New) A process comprising using the bitumen composition of claim 5 as a cold-applicable adhesive.
23. (New) A process comprising using the bitumen composition of claim 6 as a cold-applicable adhesive.
24. (New) The process of claim 9, wherein the weight ratio of component (A) to component (B) is in the range of from 1:20 to 1:5.